

Guy de Maupassant

Born at Chateau de Miromesnil near Dieppe in 1850, Guy de Maupassant was initially educated at a boarding school in Yvetot. After being expelled there for the midnight requisition of choice wine reserved for the faculty, he attended a lycée in Rouen. The visiting Gustave Flaubert, who corresponded (euphemism) with Guy's mother, the attractive divorcée Laure Le Poitevin de Maupassant, mentioned the young man to Louis Bouilhet, the town's poet laureate. Bouilhet took a liking to Guy when De Maupassant showed Bouilhet that he had memorized all of Bouilhet's poems. (Let's face it, Guy was a bit of a suck-up.)

Envisioning *la gloire*, De Maupassant joined the French army in time to find it in full retreat from a Teutonic horde trampling across northwest France. When the Franco-Prussian War ended shortly thereafter, Guy went to Paris to study law. He sought out Flaubert, who introduced him to several literary stalwarts. When De Maupassant allowed as how he had his own lettered interests, they all advised him to pursue his own career as an author. Under the watchful eye of Flaubert (a tireless craftsman with the social attitude of a provincial advocate) he wrote sparsely. But when Flaubert died in 1880, De Maupassant pitch-forked himself into international prominence.

Like a driver who speeds up when approaching a yellow traffic signal, De Maupassant churned out a veritable Mississippi River of tales. They ask such thought-provoking questions as: What's the nature of consciousness? What does it mean to have a free will? *Will the Mariners ever appear in a World Series?* Although De Maupassant produced a plethora of noteworthy sketches, travel books, poems and novels; short stories were his *métier*. Their settings range from the demi-monde of Parisian back streets to the straight-laced Norman countryside. All are sharply focused accounts with well-defined characters; none have the strict style tenets employed by most French writers of the time. Perhaps that was the problem. Besides the normal litany of schoolyard expletives, literary critics labeled his stories 'loathsome,' 'morbid,' and 'infamous,' as if his stories were Parisian kudzu. The public, however, consumed his tales as if the angry words were strong recommendations. (Nonetheless, a negative review is always hurtful. Sure, it's not like jumping on a bicycle with the seat off; but still, it smarts.)

For most of his life De Maupassant was an excitation level above stable state. Although outwardly he appeared robust, inwardly he was a mess. He traveled in search of good health throughout his life. One flight followed another until it seemed as if he was fleeing from himself. Bedeviled by personal doubts, he sought relief through drugs. Usually his better angels prevailed, but in 1893 at Cannes his internal demons caught up with him. He tried to shoot himself with an empty pistol, then cut his throat with a dull paper knife. When his faithful valet stanchd the flow of blood, the inept De Maupassant grew so violent that he had to be confined to a straitjacket. He was taken to an asylum in Passy where he died a short time later.

Essay by Bill Lounsbery

One Book – One Community

The Boys in the Boat

KRL is excited to announce the 2014 One Book, One Community title: *The Boys in the Boat* by Daniel James Brown.

"The Boys in the Boat" is an inspiring story of a most remarkable band of brothers who upstaged Adolf Hitler at the 1936 Olympics. It celebrates the 1936 U.S. men's Olympic eight-oar rowing team—nine working class boys who stormed the rowing world, transformed the sport, and galvanized the attention of millions of Americans.

The sons of loggers, shipyard workers, and farmers from the American West, the boys took on and defeated successive echelons of privilege and power. They vanquished the sons of bankers and senators rowing for elite eastern universities. They defeated the sons of British aristocrats rowing for Oxford and Cambridge. And ... oh, by the way ... they were the eight-man University of Washington Huskies crew team of 1936.

REPTILE SAFARI: Thursday, June 26, 2 pm

Dr. Dave's Reptile Safari is the ultimate hands-on and interactive cold-blooded adventure where participants can come face to face with the world's most amazing and fascinating reptiles. Geared towards an elementary aged audience. Registration is limited to 30 children. More at www.reptilesafaris.com

S.T.E.A.M. Ahead

STEAM stands for Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Mathematics. It is part of the summer program for KRL.

Our librarian Zak Sherman tells us: "there will be sign-up sheets for all the STEAM programs at the library. And a sign-up for face-painting at the Saturday, June 14th kickoff program (1-3 pm). The painter can only paint 15 kids from 1-2 and 15 more from 2-3). Other June 14th activities include a DJ and there will be games and crafts -- as many kids can come for the crafts and games and music as possible."

The STEAM programs on Thursdays will have a limit of 30 kids.

News in the 'Hood

Sturdi Products (who make pet carriers and other products for the traveling pet) is building their world headquarters in the old warehouse in Manchester. Meet them at www.sturdiproducts.com

EARLY EDITION – SPECIAL EVENT Saturday May 24th

Hypnotist Joe Black at the Manchester Library, 2 PM